VISIT…

12.2 Vectors

Some of the things we measure are determined simply by their magnitudes. To record mass, length, or time, for example, we need only write down a number and name an appropriate unit of measure. We need more information to describe a force, displacement, or velocity. To describe a force, we need to record the direction in which it acts as well as how large it is. To describe a body's displacement, we have to say in what direction it moved as well as how far. To describe a body's velocity, we have to know where the body is headed as well as how fast it is going.

Component Form

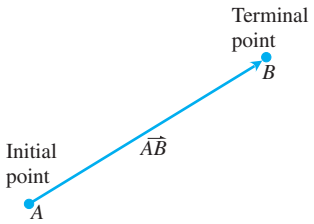
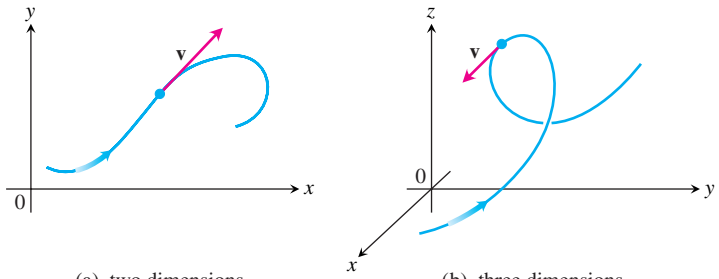


FIGURE 12.7 The directed line segment $\overrightarrow{AB}$.

A quantity such as force, displacement, or velocity is called a *vector* and is represented by a **directed line segment** (Figure 12.7). The arrow points in the direction of the action and its length gives the magnitude of the action in terms of a suitably chosen unit. For example, a force vector points in the direction in which the force acts; its length is a measure of the force's strength; a velocity vector points in the direction of motion and its length is the speed of the moving object. Figure 12.8 displays the velocity vector **v** at a specific location for a particle moving along a path in the plane or in space. (This application of vectors is studied in Chapter 13.)



(a) two dimensions (b) three dimensions

FIGURE 12.8 The velocity vector of a particle moving along a path (a) in the plane (b) in space. The arrowhead on the path indicates the direction of motion of the particle.

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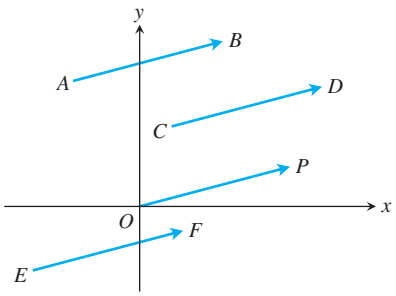

FIGURE 12.9 The four arrows in the plane (directed line segments) shown here have the same length and direction. They therefore represent the same vector, and we write $\overrightarrow{AB} = \overrightarrow{CD} = \overrightarrow{OP} = \overrightarrow{EF}$.

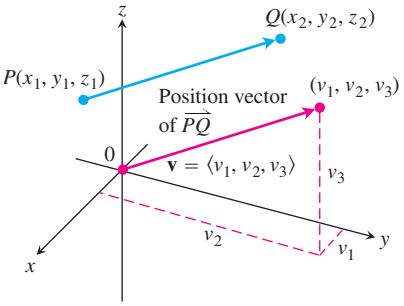

FIGURE 12.10 A vector $\overrightarrow{PQ}$ in standard position has its initial point at the origin. The directed line segments $\overrightarrow{PQ}$ and $\mathbf{v}$ are parallel and have the same length.

DEFINITIONS Vector, Initial and Terminal Point, Length

A **vector** in the plane is a directed line segment. The directed line segment $\overrightarrow{AB}$ has **initial point** A and **terminal point** B; its **length** is denoted by $|\overrightarrow{AB}|$. Two vectors are **equal** if they have the same length and direction.

The arrows we use when we draw vectors are understood to represent the same vector if they have the same length, are parallel, and point in the same direction (Figure 12.9) regardless of the initial point.

In textbooks, vectors are usually written in lowercase, boldface letters, for example **u**, **v**, and **w**. Sometimes we use uppercase boldface letters, such as **F**, to denote a force vector. In handwritten form, it is customary to draw small arrows above the letters, for example $\vec{u}$, $\vec{v}$, $\vec{w}$, and $\vec{F}$.

We need a way to represent vectors algebraically so that we can be more precise about the direction of a vector.

Let $\mathbf{v} = \overrightarrow{PQ}$. There is one directed line segment equal to $\overrightarrow{PQ}$ whose initial point is the origin (Figure 12.10). It is the representative of **v** in **standard position** and is the vector we normally use to represent **v**. We can specify **v** by writing the coordinates of its terminal point (v_1, v_2, v_3) when **v** is in standard position. If **v** is a vector in the plane its terminal point (v_1, v_2) has two coordinates.

DEFINITION Component Form

If **v** is a **two-dimensional** vector in the plane equal to the vector with initial point at the origin and terminal point (v_1, v_2), then the **component form** of **v** is

$$\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2 \rangle.$$

If **v** is a **three-dimensional** vector equal to the vector with initial point at the origin and terminal point (v_1, v_2, v_3), then the **component form** of **v** is

$$\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle.$$

So a two-dimensional vector is an ordered pair $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2 \rangle$ of real numbers, and a three-dimensional vector is an ordered triple $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$ of real numbers. The numbers v_1, v_2, and v_3 are called the **components** of **v**.

Observe that if $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$ is represented by the directed line segment $\overrightarrow{PQ}$, where the initial point is $P(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ and the terminal point is $Q(x_2, y_2, z_2)$, then $x_1 + v_1 = x_2$, $y_1 + v_2 = y_2$, and $z_1 + v_3 = z_2$ (see Figure 12.10). Thus, $v_1 = x_2 - x_1$, $v_2 = y_2 - y_1$, and $v_3 = z_2 - z_1$ are the components of $\overrightarrow{PQ}$.

In summary, given the points $P(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ and $Q(x_2, y_2, z_2)$, the standard position vector $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$ equal to $\overrightarrow{PQ}$ is

$$\mathbf{v} = \langle x_2 - x_1, y_2 - y_1, z_2, -z_1 \rangle.$$

If **v** is two-dimensional with $P(x_1, y_1)$ and $Q(x_2, y_2)$ as points in the plane, then $\mathbf{v} = \langle x_2 - x_1, y_2 - y_1 \rangle$. There is no third component for planar vectors. With this understanding, we will develop the algebra of three-dimensional vectors and simply drop the third component when the vector is two-dimensional (a planar vector).

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Two vectors are equal if and only if their standard position vectors are identical. Thus $\langle u_1, u_2, u_3 \rangle$ and $\langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$ are equal if and only if $u_1 = v_1$, $u_2 = v_2$, and $u_3 = v_3$.

The **magnitude** or **length** of the vector $\overrightarrow{PQ}$ is the length of any of its equivalent directed line segment representations. In particular, if $\mathbf{v} = \langle x_2 - x_1, y_2 - y_1, z_2 - z_1 \rangle$ is the standard position vector for $\overrightarrow{PQ}$, then the distance formula gives the magnitude or length of $\mathbf{v}$, denoted by the symbol $|\mathbf{v}|$ or $\|\mathbf{v}\|$.

The **magnitude** or **length** of the vector $\mathbf{v} = \overrightarrow{PQ}$ is the nonnegative number

$$|\mathbf{v}| = \sqrt{v_1^2 + v_2^2 + v_3^2} = \sqrt{(x_2 - x_1)^2 + (y_2 - y_1)^2 + (z_2 - z_1)^2}$$

(See Figure 12.10.)

The only vector with length 0 is the **zero vector** $\mathbf{0} = \langle 0, 0 \rangle$ or $\mathbf{0} = \langle 0, 0, 0 \rangle$. This vector is also the only vector with no specific direction.

EXAMPLE 1 Component Form and Length of a Vector

Find the **(a)** component form and **(b)** length of the vector with initial point $P(-3, 4, 1)$ and terminal point $Q(-5, 2, 2)$.

Solution

(a) The standard position vector $\mathbf{v}$ representing $\overrightarrow{PQ}$ has components

$$v_1 = x_2 - x_1 = -5 - (-3) = -2, \qquad v_2 = y_2 - y_1 = 2 - 4 = -2,$$

and

$$v_3 = z_2 - z_1 = 2 - 1 = 1.$$

The component form of $\overrightarrow{PQ}$ is

$$\mathbf{v} = \langle -2, -2, 1 \rangle.$$

(b) The length or magnitude of $\mathbf{v} = \overrightarrow{PQ}$ is

$$|\mathbf{v}| = \sqrt{(-2)^2 + (-2)^2 + (1)^2} = \sqrt{9} = 3.$$ ■

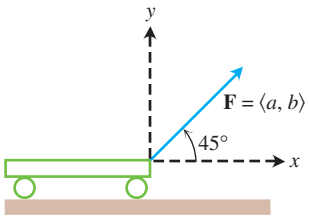

FIGURE 12.11 The force pulling the cart forward is represented by the vector $\mathbf{F}$ of magnitude 20 (pounds) making an angle of 45° with the horizontal ground (positive x-axis) (Example 2).

EXAMPLE 2 Force Moving a Cart

A small cart is being pulled along a smooth horizontal floor with a 20-lb force $\mathbf{F}$ making a 45° angle to the floor (Figure 12.11). What is the *effective* force moving the cart forward?

Solution The effective force is the horizontal component of $\mathbf{F} = \langle a, b \rangle$, given by

$$a = |\mathbf{F}| \cos 45° = (20)\left(\frac{\sqrt{2}}{2}\right) \approx 14.14 \text{ lb}.$$

Notice that $\mathbf{F}$ is a two-dimensional vector. ■

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Vector Algebra Operations

Two principal operations involving vectors are *vector addition* and *scalar multiplication*. A **scalar** is simply a real number, and is called such when we want to draw attention to its differences from vectors. Scalars can be positive, negative, or zero.

DEFINITIONS Vector Addition and Multiplication of a Vector by a Scalar

Let $\mathbf{u} = \langle u_1, u_2, u_3 \rangle$ and $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$ be vectors with k a scalar.

Addition: $\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v} = \langle u_1 + v_1, u_2 + v_2, u_3 + v_3 \rangle$

Scalar multiplication: $k\mathbf{u} = \langle ku_1, ku_2, ku_3 \rangle$

We add vectors by adding the corresponding components of the vectors. We multiply a vector by a scalar by multiplying each component by the scalar. The definitions apply to planar vectors except there are only two components, $\langle u_1, u_2 \rangle$ and $\langle v_1, v_2 \rangle$.

The definition of vector addition is illustrated geometrically for planar vectors in Figure 12.12a, where the initial point of one vector is placed at the terminal point of the other. Another interpretation is shown in Figure 12.12b (called the **parallelogram law** of addition), where the sum, called the **resultant vector**, is the diagonal of the parallelogram. In physics, forces add vectorially as do velocities, accelerations, and so on. So the force acting on a particle subject to electric and gravitational forces is obtained by adding the two force vectors.

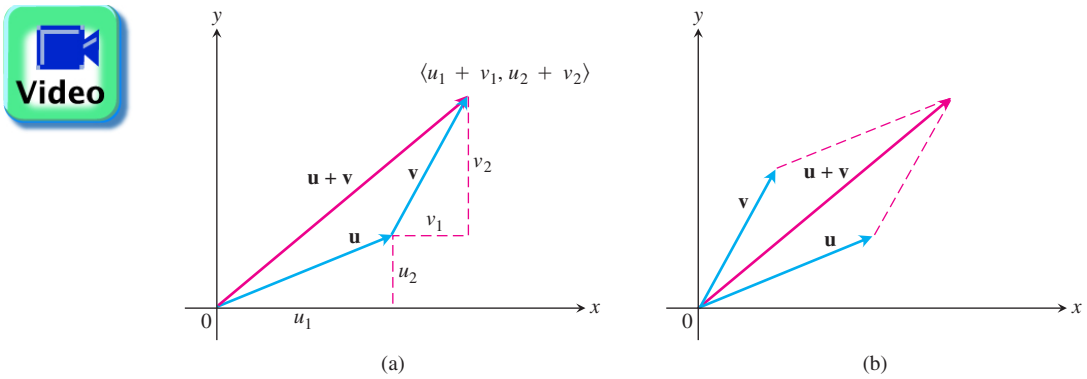

FIGURE 12.12 (a) Geometric interpretation of the vector sum. (b) The parallelogram law of vector addition.

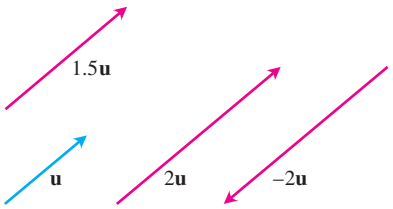

FIGURE 12.13 Scalar multiples of $\mathbf{u}$.

Figure 12.13 displays a geometric interpretation of the product $k\mathbf{u}$ of the scalar k and vector $\mathbf{u}$. If $k > 0$, then $k\mathbf{u}$ has the same direction as $\mathbf{u}$; if $k < 0$, then the direction of $k\mathbf{u}$ is opposite to that of $\mathbf{u}$. Comparing the lengths of $\mathbf{u}$ and $k\mathbf{u}$, we see that

$$|k\mathbf{u}| = \sqrt{(ku_1)^2 + (ku_2)^2 + (ku_3)^2} = \sqrt{k^2(u_1^2 + u_2^2 + u_3^2)}$$

$$= \sqrt{k^2}\sqrt{u_1^2 + u_2^2 + u_3^2} = |k|\,|\mathbf{u}|.$$

The length of $k\mathbf{u}$ is the absolute value of the scalar k times the length of $\mathbf{u}$. The vector $(-1)\mathbf{u} = -\mathbf{u}$ has the same length as $\mathbf{u}$ but points in the opposite direction.

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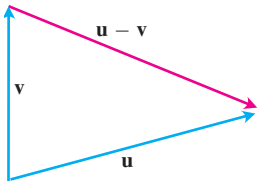
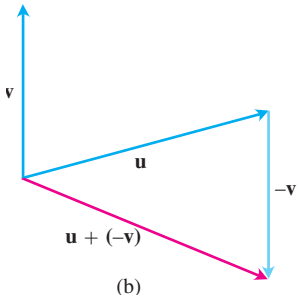


(a)



(b)

FIGURE 12.14 (a) The vector $\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}$, when added to $\mathbf{v}$, gives $\mathbf{u}$. (b) $\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{u} + (-\mathbf{v})$.

By the **difference** $\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}$ of two vectors, we mean

$$\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{u} + (-\mathbf{v}).$$

If $\mathbf{u} = \langle u_1, u_2, u_3 \rangle$ and $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$, then

$$\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v} = \langle u_1 - v_1, u_2 - v_2, u_3 - v_3 \rangle.$$

Note that $(\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}) + \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{u}$, so adding the vector $(\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v})$ to $\mathbf{v}$ gives $\mathbf{u}$ (Figure 12.14a).

Figure 12.14b shows the difference $\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}$ as the sum $\mathbf{u} + (-\mathbf{v})$.

EXAMPLE 3 Performing Operations on Vectors

Let $\mathbf{u} = \langle -1, 3, 1 \rangle$ and $\mathbf{v} = \langle 4, 7, 0 \rangle$. Find

(a) $2\mathbf{u} + 3\mathbf{v}$ **(b)** $\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v}$ **(c)** $\left|\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{u}\right|$.

Solution

(a) $2\mathbf{u} + 3\mathbf{v} = 2\langle -1, 3, 1 \rangle + 3\langle 4, 7, 0 \rangle = \langle -2, 6, 2 \rangle + \langle 12, 21, 0 \rangle = \langle 10, 27, 2 \rangle$

(b) $\mathbf{u} - \mathbf{v} = \langle -1, 3, 1 \rangle - \langle 4, 7, 0 \rangle = \langle -1 - 4, 3 - 7, 1 - 0 \rangle = \langle -5, -4, 1 \rangle$

(c) $$\left|\frac{1}{2}\mathbf{u}\right| = \left|\left\langle -\frac{1}{2}, \frac{3}{2}, \frac{1}{2} \right\rangle\right| = \sqrt{\left(-\frac{1}{2}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{3}{2}\right)^2 + \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)^2} = \frac{1}{2}\sqrt{11}.$$ ■

Vector operations have many of the properties of ordinary arithmetic. These properties are readily verified using the definitions of vector addition and multiplication by a scalar.

Properties of Vector Operations

Let $\mathbf{u}$, $\mathbf{v}$, $\mathbf{w}$ be vectors and a, b be scalars.

1. $\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v} = \mathbf{v} + \mathbf{u}$
2. $(\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}) + \mathbf{w} = \mathbf{u} + (\mathbf{v} + \mathbf{w})$
3. $\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{0} = \mathbf{u}$
4. $\mathbf{u} + (-\mathbf{u}) = \mathbf{0}$
5. $0\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{0}$
6. $1\mathbf{u} = \mathbf{u}$
7. $a(b\mathbf{u}) = (ab)\mathbf{u}$
8. $a(\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}) = a\mathbf{u} + a\mathbf{v}$
9. $(a + b)\mathbf{u} = a\mathbf{u} + b\mathbf{u}$

An important application of vectors occurs in navigation.

EXAMPLE 4 Finding Ground Speed and Direction

A Boeing® 767® airplane, flying due east at 500 mph in still air, encounters a 70-mph tailwind blowing in the direction 60° north of east. The airplane holds its compass heading due east but, because of the wind, acquires a new ground speed and direction. What are they?

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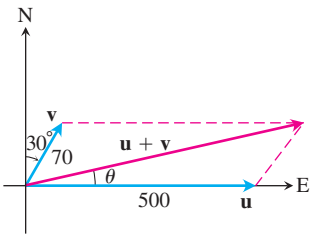

FIGURE 12.15 Vectors representing the velocities of the airplane **u** and tailwind **v** in Example 4.

Solution If $\mathbf{u}$ = the velocity of the airplane alone and $\mathbf{v}$ = the velocity of the tailwind, then $|\mathbf{u}| = 500$ and $|\mathbf{v}| = 70$ (Figure 12.15). The velocity of the airplane with respect to the ground is given by the magnitude and direction of the *resultant vector* $\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}$. If we let the positive x-axis represent east and the positive y-axis represent north, then the component forms of $\mathbf{u}$ and $\mathbf{v}$ are

$$\mathbf{u} = \langle 500, 0 \rangle \qquad \text{and} \qquad \mathbf{v} = \langle 70 \cos 60°, 70 \sin 60° \rangle = \langle 35, 35\sqrt{3} \rangle.$$

Therefore,

$$\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v} = \langle 535, 35\sqrt{3} \rangle$$

$$|\mathbf{u} + \mathbf{v}| = \sqrt{535^2 + (35\sqrt{3})^2} \approx 538.4$$

and

$$\theta = \tan^{-1} \frac{35\sqrt{3}}{535} \approx 6.5°. \qquad \text{Figure 12.15}$$

The new ground speed of the airplane is about 538.4 mph, and its new direction is about 6.5° north of east. ■

Unit Vectors

A vector $\mathbf{v}$ of length 1 is called a **unit vector**. The **standard unit vectors** are

$$\mathbf{i} = \langle 1, 0, 0 \rangle, \qquad \mathbf{j} = \langle 0, 1, 0 \rangle, \qquad \text{and} \qquad \mathbf{k} = \langle 0, 0, 1 \rangle.$$

Any vector $\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle$ can be written as a *linear combination* of the standard unit vectors as follows:

$$\mathbf{v} = \langle v_1, v_2, v_3 \rangle = \langle v_1, 0, 0 \rangle + \langle 0, v_2, 0 \rangle + \langle 0, 0, v_3 \rangle$$

$$= v_1\langle 1, 0, 0 \rangle + v_2\langle 0, 1, 0 \rangle + v_3\langle 0, 0, 1 \rangle$$

$$= v_1\mathbf{i} + v_2\mathbf{j} + v_3\mathbf{k}.$$

We call the scalar (or number) v_1 the **i-component** of the vector $\mathbf{v}$, v_2 the **j-component**, and v_3 the **k-component**. In component form, the vector from $P_1(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ to $P_2(x_2, y_2, z_2)$ is

$$\overrightarrow{P_1P_2} = (x_2 - x_1)\mathbf{i} + (y_2 - y_1)\mathbf{j} + (z_2 - z_1)\mathbf{k}$$

(Figure 12.16).

Whenever $\mathbf{v} \neq \mathbf{0}$, its length $|\mathbf{v}|$ is not zero and

$$\left| \frac{1}{|\mathbf{v}|}\mathbf{v} \right| = \frac{1}{|\mathbf{v}|}|\mathbf{v}| = 1.$$

That is, $\mathbf{v}/|\mathbf{v}|$ is a unit vector in the direction of $\mathbf{v}$, called **the direction** of the nonzero vector $\mathbf{v}$.

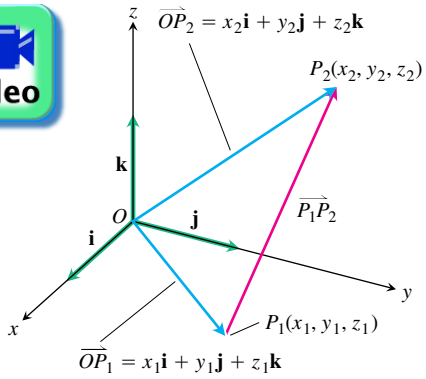

FIGURE 12.16 The vector from P_1 to P_2 is $\overrightarrow{P_1P_2} = (x_2 - x_1)\mathbf{i} + (y_2 - y_1)\mathbf{j} + (z_2 - z_1)\mathbf{k}$.

EXAMPLE 5 Finding a Vector's Direction

Find a unit vector $\mathbf{u}$ in the direction of the vector from $P_1(1, 0, 1)$ to $P_2(3, 2, 0)$.

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Solution We divide $\overrightarrow{P_1P_2}$ by its length:

$$\overrightarrow{P_1P_2} = (3 - 1)\mathbf{i} + (2 - 0)\mathbf{j} + (0 - 1)\mathbf{k} = 2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k}$$

$$|\overrightarrow{P_1P_2}| = \sqrt{(2)^2 + (2)^2 + (-1)^2} = \sqrt{4 + 4 + 1} = \sqrt{9} = 3$$

$$\mathbf{u} = \frac{\overrightarrow{P_1P_2}}{|\overrightarrow{P_1P_2}|} = \frac{2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k}}{3} = \frac{2}{3}\mathbf{i} + \frac{2}{3}\mathbf{j} - \frac{1}{3}\mathbf{k}.$$

The unit vector $\mathbf{u}$ is the direction of $\overrightarrow{P_1P_2}$. ■

EXAMPLE 6 Expressing Velocity as Speed Times Direction

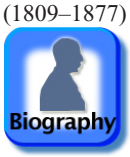
If $\mathbf{v} = 3\mathbf{i} - 4\mathbf{j}$ is a velocity vector, express $\mathbf{v}$ as a product of its speed times a unit vector in the direction of motion.

Solution Speed is the magnitude (length) of $\mathbf{v}$:

$$|\mathbf{v}| = \sqrt{(3)^2 + (-4)^2} = \sqrt{9 + 16} = 5.$$

HISTORICAL BIOGRAPHY

Hermann Grassmann
(1809–1877)



The unit vector $\mathbf{v}/|\mathbf{v}|$ has the same direction as $\mathbf{v}$:

$$\frac{\mathbf{v}}{|\mathbf{v}|} = \frac{3\mathbf{i} - 4\mathbf{j}}{5} = \frac{3}{5}\mathbf{i} - \frac{4}{5}\mathbf{j}.$$

So

$$\mathbf{v} = 3\mathbf{i} - 4\mathbf{j} = 5\left(\frac{3}{5}\mathbf{i} - \frac{4}{5}\mathbf{j}\right).$$

Length (speed) — Direction of motion

■

In summary, we can express any nonzero vector $\mathbf{v}$ in terms of its two important features, length and direction, by writing $\mathbf{v} = |\mathbf{v}|\dfrac{\mathbf{v}}{|\mathbf{v}|}$.

If $\mathbf{v} \neq \mathbf{0}$, then

1. $\dfrac{\mathbf{v}}{|\mathbf{v}|}$ is a unit vector in the direction of $\mathbf{v}$;
2. the equation $\mathbf{v} = |\mathbf{v}|\dfrac{\mathbf{v}}{|\mathbf{v}|}$ expresses $\mathbf{v}$ in terms of its length and direction.

EXAMPLE 7 A Force Vector

A force of 6 newtons is applied in the direction of the vector $\mathbf{v} = 2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k}$. Express the force $\mathbf{F}$ as a product of its magnitude and direction.

Solution The force vector has magnitude 6 and direction $\dfrac{\mathbf{v}}{|\mathbf{v}|}$, so

$$\mathbf{F} = 6\frac{\mathbf{v}}{|\mathbf{v}|} = 6\frac{2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k}}{\sqrt{2^2 + 2^2 + (-1)^2}} = 6\frac{2\mathbf{i} + 2\mathbf{j} - \mathbf{k}}{3}$$

$$= 6\left(\frac{2}{3}\mathbf{i} + \frac{2}{3}\mathbf{j} - \frac{1}{3}\mathbf{k}\right).$$

■

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Midpoint of a Line Segment

Vectors are often useful in geometry. For example, the coordinates of the midpoint of a line segment are found by averaging.

The **midpoint** M of the line segment joining points $P_1(x_1, y_1, z_1)$ and $P_2(x_2, y_2, z_2)$ is the point

$$\left(\frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}, \frac{y_1 + y_2}{2}, \frac{z_1 + z_2}{2}\right).$$

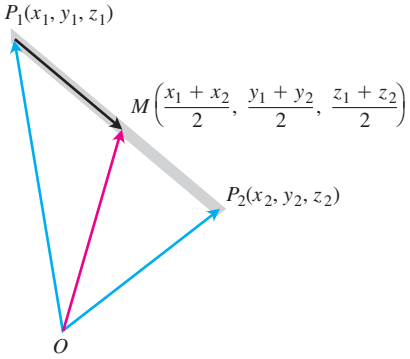

FIGURE 12.17 The coordinates of the midpoint are the averages of the coordinates of P_1 and P_2.

To see why, observe (Figure 12.17) that

$$\begin{aligned}\overrightarrow{OM} &= \overrightarrow{OP}_1 + \frac{1}{2}(\overrightarrow{P_1P_2}) = \overrightarrow{OP}_1 + \frac{1}{2}(\overrightarrow{OP}_2 - \overrightarrow{OP}_1)\\ &= \frac{1}{2}(\overrightarrow{OP}_1 + \overrightarrow{OP}_2)\\ &= \frac{x_1 + x_2}{2}\mathbf{i} + \frac{y_1 + y_2}{2}\mathbf{j} + \frac{z_1 + z_2}{2}\mathbf{k}.\end{aligned}$$

EXAMPLE 8 Finding Midpoints

The midpoint of the segment joining $P_1(3, -2, 0)$ and $P_2(7, 4, 4)$ is

$$\left(\frac{3 + 7}{2}, \frac{-2 + 4}{2}, \frac{0 + 4}{2}\right) = (5, 1, 2).$$

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